



Remote Participation Study Committee

Date: **July 13, 2022**

Time: **7:30 – 8:30 pm**

Location: Hybrid, Select Board Conference Room and Zoom.

Minutes

Attendance: Mustafa Varoglu, Chair, Jennifer Susse, Co-Chair, Stacie Nicole Smith, Secretary, Jim Feeney, Eric Helmuth, Rachel Zembery, Bill Hayner

AGENDA

1. Review and accept meeting minutes from April 19, May 24, June 28 meetings – 10 minutes
2. Future meeting dates – 5 minutes
3. Hybrid demo current and next steps, including document review – 40
4. Future business – 5 minutes

Decisions Reached and Action Items:

- Minutes from April 19, May 24, and June 28 were approved
- Group will further consider potential policy suggestions on recording and storage of remote meetings.
- Eric will follow up with ACMI
- Stacie and Rachel will work on their pieces of the Guidance Document
- Mustafa will draft the committee and audience questionnaires, with Jen's input
- Next Committee meeting will be August 2

Summary of Discussions:

The meeting was called to order.

Approval of the Minutes: Minutes from April 19, May 24, and June 28 were approved.

Future Meeting Dates: Next Meeting is August 2. Mustafa may be late, Jennifer will initiate. Still need to do a Zoom poll for end of August. All other dates set.

Hybrid Demo Current and Next Steps:

TECHNOLOGY:

- Eric and Jim were present in the Select Board room in order to test the NEAT BAR technology. The group agreed that the technology worked well.
- It was noted that legislation to extend the remote meeting option is being addressed in the State and expected to pass. [NOTE: The bill to extend the remote participation order until March 31, 2023, was signed by the Lieutenant governor on July 16.]
- The group discussed the issue of Town storage of recorded Zoom meetings. Jim is looking into what is possible, what the costs are, and suggested that the Town will need to set a policy about recording and storage of meetings, in order to have consistency about how recordings are managed. Even if recordings are not kept long-term, there are clear budget implications for staffing to upload, track, and delete them. Participants questioned whether it was necessary to record meetings, or to even encourage it. It was noted that this committee has been recording them as a reference for taking minutes, so it would be helpful for the Town to have a policy. The group agreed to circle back to this issue when we have more information from Jim.
- The committee has asked for legal guidance on what is legally permissible if technology fails -what votes can happen, can meetings be cancelled or postponed if a quorum isn't present? A request for input is into Doug, and are waiting to hear back. The legal question will likely arise if there is not a quorum in the room. If there isn't a legal quorum still in the meeting, there is a question about whether or how a decision on next steps (e.g., to adjourn or postpone) can be taken. If there is a quorum physically present, they have the legal right to continue, but there is still a policy question. We have recommended that Chairs make clear in advance how the committee will respond in such a situation. Do we want to recommend that Committees require a quorum in person?
- Outreach to ACMI – we haven't heard back from them; Eric will ask again.

Guidance Document:

Jennifer sent around an initial draft of protocols, sample language, and best practices.

Still to do:

- when to use a webinar vs. meeting (Stacie to do)
- Decision points related to Zoom for a meeting (Rachel)
- Decision points related to accessibility (Janice)

Keep in mind that we have only one Webinar license, so this might not be an option for many. The group agreed to hold off on Webinar decision point guidance for that reason.

Aim for draft for August 2 meeting.

- Other document needed is about each of the technologies. They are fairly simple to set up, so the documents shouldn't be too complex. Jim is still testing these with a range of uses in order to see how they work. Fin Com tried the OWL, thought they would do better with paired OWLs. Didn't realize there was a mute button – illustrates why a one-pager "how to" can be helpful.

Also to do:

- Determine which committees will be meeting in which rooms with which technologies. If fully remote remains available as an option, we will have to see if those committees are still interested in participating.
- Google Form Questionnaires: for Committee Chairs and questionnaire for participants. We need to be able to evaluate if it is worth the effort for the added value. Asking what worked and didn't work, Chair will answer how many people remote (vs in person)? How many participated? How will we share the form? - Mustafa will work on this drawing on previous notes.

The group discussed a range of Zoom Decision-points / Advice: Do you want a co-host? Do you use the waiting room? Have had the Chair be the one who opens and runs the meeting. Maybe Sec, Vice-chair. Make a sound when people enter and leave? How get reports? Not a tutorial on Zoom. The big stuff. Also see what can be Town decisions for the Zoom Account vs individual decisions. There was discussion about the ways Zoom tracks permissions and names. Ultimately, the group agreed that providing advice about remote (as opposed to hybrid) meetings was not the charge of the group.

The Meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.